

YOU, THE RIDER

With Heart Zones Cycling, riding is all about you, the rider. As you read each of the next nine chapters, you are going to learn a whole new way of training. To appreciate this new way of training, think for a moment about the old way: In the old way of riding, you may have paid more attention to the *ride* than to *you*. In the old way, you may have recruited riding partners and followed a ride plan that did not fit your training needs. In the old way, you may not have looked at your personal framework and matched your unique needs to your training program. In the old way, you may not have measured your metabolic health to determine its capacity for exercise stress. In the old way, you may not have assessed your current emotional stress to see how it impacts your riding performance. In the old way, you may not have known that there is a new way to ride that leads to riding your best. Heart Zones Cycling is the new way. It makes you a better rider because it is personalized for you—for the unique individual that you are. It takes its cues from your heart, your physiology, and your unique responses to everything that affects your riding. Whether you are relatively new to the sport or have been a competitive cyclist for a long time, Heart Zones Cycling gives you a new way to ride—a new way to better fitness, faster times, longer distances, and more enjoyment on the bike.

WHAT KIND OF RIDER ARE YOU?

Where on the continuum of cycling enthusiasts do you find yourself? Read the following descriptions of four basic categories of riders—Fitness, Event, Competitive, and Racing—and decide which one best describes you as a rider right now.

Fitness Rider: You ride for fun and fitness a few hours a week at most, whenever you can find the time. You want to maintain his fitness base, ride indoor or outdoor, and you might also ride to work or with groups as a social activity.

Event Rider: You look forward to riding in one or more cycling events every year. You typically ride from six to fifteen hours a week. You want to improve your fitness and your skill set on the bike so you can finish each event strong.

Competitive Rider: You are motivated to get faster and go farther. You ride fifteen hours a week or more, you like to make a good showing in your age group standings, and you are striving to reach the winner's podium.

Racer: You train twenty to thirty-five hours a week, with some weeks

reaching fifty hours. Your goal is to win—period. You train to achieve the highest speed with the lowest risk of downtime and to maximize your abilities for peak performance on race day.

Did you recognize yourself in any of the four descriptions? Maybe you are straddling two categories. If so, bump yourself up to the next level and challenge yourself a bit. Although riders in all four levels will find useful information in this book, we have geared it particularly to the riders in the middle two groups: the event riders and the competitive riders. It is you folks who are goal oriented, ready to take your training to the next level, eager to learn, and have the most to gain from a new way of riding—the Heart Zones way! Whether an event rider or a competition rider, you are part of a new era, the first generation of riders who are discovering new ways to ride. Ushering out the old ways of riding takes a bit of courage. After all, most of us tend to gravitate back to what we know, to what is familiar, even when we know there is a better way. Enough of that! Muster up your courage—it is time to connect your riding to technology. In fact, there is no better way to take your training to the next level than to connect to the power of the one piece